

Award-winning DCCA seen as model for state agencies

The state Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs handles a variety of tasks with a sense of community, dedication and responsibility that creates a model for other governmental agencies.

Recognizing that attitude, the Hawaii Psychological Association named the agency the winner in the government category of the 2004 Healthy Workplace Awards.

DCCA's 370 employees have a wide range of responsibilities including banking, professional and vocational licensing; insurance regulation; business registration; and consumer protection.

"Our employees have built a culture of customer service — we have worked hard to establish a climate where our employees view customer service as a top priority," Director Mark Recktenwald said. "Although we have made significant improvements, we are committed to ensuring that we continue the improvement process."

He said the agency is working closely with The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii and Project J.O.B.S., which survey Hawaii businesses to identify problems and then work with DCCA to resolve any issues that may relate to the department.

Pleasure to work with

Chamber President and CEO Jim Tollefson



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excellent ratings of any government agency.

For example, business registration documents that used to take months to process are now completed in a few days and some can be completed immediately online. The department has been a national leader in making business registration services available to the public online. Hawaii earned a third-place ranking out of all 50 states in the electronic commerce and business regulation portion of a recent government survey. It also had the highest rankings from the National Federation of Independent

says DCCA has been a pleasure to work with.

"They operate as if they were a business and it shows," Tollefson said. "They solicit input and it's very refreshing."

He said the chamber goes out into the business community to find out what companies need in order to survive and thrive in Hawaii, and to assess support that can be provided by the state and government agencies. Based on the project J.O.B.S. 2003 survey, DCCA had the highest number of

Businesses-Hawaii in the area of improved customer service.

"They are a highly democratic group of managers with an unpretentious leader and great functionality," said Karl Minke, one of the psychologists who did site visits for the Healthy Workplace Awards. "Their sense of commitment and community goes far beyond that required by their job descriptions."

DCCA employees become part of the decision-making process by serving on committees. Unlike many organizations, DCCA empowers its committees to investigate and make decisions on vital issues.

For example, in November 2003, when it faced the task of moving from the Princess Kamamalu building, its home for 40 years, the entire department came together. According to Administrative Assistant Garrett Kashimoto, a committee representing a cross-section of employees from all levels planned the historic move down to the last detail. From choosing furniture and floor plans to assigning space and organizing the move, the committee did it all with very few problems. As a result, the move was made using a rolling shutdown process that minimized the disruption of service to the public.

Respect and trust

The department shows its respect and

trust for employees through its training, alternate workweek program, flexible working hours policy and leave-sharing. It recognizes employees who have demonstrated exemplary leadership, outstanding work performance, creativity and innovation in achieving work efficiency with manager and employee of the year awards. It consistently assesses quality, safety, reliability, timeliness and initiative.

DCCA's Anela program (anela means "angel" in Hawaiian) lends helping hands by adopting two families and donating toys, food and other goods. It gives back to the community in a variety of other ways including active participation in Aloha United Way, Hawaii Foodbank, Ready to Learn, and the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation.

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